



ROBIN DES BOIS

ON_{the} TRAIL

Information and analysis bulletin on animal poaching and smuggling
n°3 / 1st October - 31th December 2013

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Introduction

Welcome to the third world tour of endangered species embarked in the cruel limbo and maelstrom of international traffic.

Supposed to be aphrodisiacs, euphoria-inducing, lucky charms, good or bad omens, divination or miraculous, many animals are sacrificed on the universal altar of superstition, even vultures. The black flood of black magic brings in great amounts of money to those who exploit common naïvety and is taking a stronger role in international trafficking of animals and animal parts. In that sense, anti-superstition laws that are starting to be enacted in India despite violent and sometimes murderous reactions are, to the eyes of the « On the Trail » detectives, positive steps towards progress and the respect of human and animal rights.

CITES* Appendices

Appendix I : species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances and under import and export permits.

Appendix II : export permit required in order to avoid utilization incompatible with the species survival. Import permit if required by national law.

Appendix III : species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade. In the case of trade from a State that included the species in Appendix III, an export permit of that State is required.

* Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. 179 Member States.

Rhinoceroses

The white rhinoceros *Ceratotherium simum* and black rhinoceros *Diceros bicornis* ranging in Africa are listed in Appendix I, except for the white rhinoceros populations of Swaziland and South Africa which are listed in Appendix II for trade of live animals and hunting trophies.

The 3 Asian rhinoceros species are in Appendix I: *Rhinoceros unicornis*, *Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*, *Rhinoceros sondaicus*.

1004 rhinoceros killed in South Africa in 2013

GANG. Warrant against a rhino poacher. Nepal. December 2013

An international arrest warrant was issued by Interpol at the request of the Government of Nepal concerning 30 year old Rajkumar Praja, a member of a gang of 13 poachers of rhinos in the Chitwan National Park. He has been sentenced, in absentia, to 15 years in prison.

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PRAJA, RAJKUMAR
WANTED BY THE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES OF NEPAL FOR PROSECUTION / TO SERVE A SENTENCE

IDENTITY PARTICULARS

Present family name: **PRAJA**
Forename: **RAJKUMAR**
Sex: **Male**
Date of birth: **10/05/1983 (30 years old)**
Place of birth: **KORAK VDC-9, CHITWAN, Nepal**
Language spoken: **Nepali, Hindi**
Nationality: **Nepal**

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Colour of hair: **Black**
Colour of eyes: **Black**

CHARGES Published as provided by requesting entity

Charges: **Planning and execution of rhino poaching and possession and transaction of rhino horns.**

PHOTOS

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Your national or local police
General Secretariat of INTERPOL

This extract of the Red Notice has been approved for public dissemination

AFRICA

Arrest of 5 poachers

Phalaborwa, Limpopo, South Africa

October 1, 2013

An informant led to the arrest of poachers. 3 of them were South African, and the other 2 were from Mozambique. They had planned to get into the Kruger National Park via the entrance at Phalaborwa to poach rhinos. The police cornered them in the parking lot of a shopping center in the city. A hunting rifle with a silencer, 8 rounds of live ammunition, a butcher knife, an axe, and a vehicle were all confiscated. In South Africa, conspiracy to poach rhinos is a crime.



2 poachers arrested

Thula Thula Game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

October 11, 2013

3 men broke into the reserve. 2 of them were arrested by security agents, the third escaped. A gun, an axe, a machete, and several knives were found in their possession. They are suspected of conspiring to poach 2 rhinos in the reserve even though the rhinos are under 24/7 hour surveillance.

Arrest of 4 men suspected of poaching

Mbazwana, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

October 13, 2013

Police, after receiving information about the presence of poachers in their area, spotted and stopped a Mazda pickup. A thorough search of the vehicle revealed a dismantled rifle hidden under the car near the fuel tank. 4 men, 2 of whom are from Mozambique, were arrested and are charged for illegal possession of unlicensed firearms. They are suspected of attempted poaching. They will appear before the Court of Ubombo.

Poaching of a female white rhino

Koffyraagte Private Game Reserve, Province of Eastern Cape, South Africa

October 19, 2013

A white rhino was killed, and another seriously injured, at the private game reserve.

One rhino poached

Askari Lodge, Province of Gauteng, South Africa.

October 23, 2013

A pregnant female rhino was found dead, her horn removed.

Arrest of 2 men suspected of rhino poaching

Hluhluwe-Umfolozi National Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

October 30, 2013

A suspect, allegedly a specialist in rhino poaching, and his sidekick were questioned in Hluhluwe-Umfolozi National Park. The provincial authorities say that « local communities become the eyes and ears of Ezemvolvo (Management Authority of wildlife).» Residents were puzzled by the behavior of 2 suspects. In the Umfolozi Park, tourists and poachers can both benefit, each in their own way, from the Big Five (lions, elephants, buffalos, leopards, and rhinos).

Seizure of 2 rhinoceros horns, a shotgun and 12 live rounds of ammunition

Kanyamazane, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa

October 2013

During a night routine control, police arrested a 23 year old man and carried out the seizures. 4 people were able to escape. The rhino is thought to have been shot the night before. 4 days later the police raided a house and arrested 2 individuals aged 25 to 36 years, suspected of having fled at the time of the initial arrest.

Court appearance of 2 women for conspiracy of rhino poaching

Ladysmith Regional Court, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

October 2013

They are 22 years old and had a horn buyer in Gauteng. All they needed was a hunter. They provided him with a .303 hunting rifle fitted with a telescopic sight. They didn't suspect that this rhino killer was actually an undercover cop. They were arrested. Their target was a horned individual living in Umsuluzi Wildlife Reserve on the R74 road. That was in April of this year. The October trial has been delayed. One of the women did not present herself but submitted a medical certificate stating she was ill. Their lawyer withdrew from the case due to non-payment. Anything goes when it comes to stalling the course of justice. Profiting from this case, KwaZulu-Natal «wildlife» spokesman expressed his belief in the experimental injection of a colored and indelible mixture into rhino horns, supposedly harmless to the rhinos. At the current rate, the statistics are clear: African rhinos will be extinct by 2026 according to predictions by the Zululand Wildlife Forum.

Court hearing for 2 men suspected of rhino poaching

**Groblersdal, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
November 4, 2013**

Since the beginning of the year 2013, 800 rhinos have been killed in South Africa. The arrest of 5 suspects divided into 2 cars surely avoided more massacres. The roadblock put a stop to their trip to the Marble Hall reserve. With a gun and a silencer, ammunition and an axe, they certainly weren't ordinary tourists.

5 poachers arrested

**Thula Thula Game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
November 5, 2013**

A sixth poacher was killed during the crossfire. One ranger and one of the arrested poachers were wounded. Authorities found a .303 caliber rifle on the premises. The rhinos are safe and sound.



Poaching of 2 rhinos

**Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, County of Isiolo, Kenya
November 17, 2013**

By the light of the full moon poachers entered one of the most well kept reserves to kill a 17 year old female black rhino and her 2 year old calf. The horns were cut and the poachers disappeared with them. At Lewa Wildlife Conservancy over 60 rhinos are guarded 24/7 by a team of professionals. 150 armed rangers and guard dog handlers patrol with their bloodhounds along the 150 km of electrified fencing. The reserve also has aerial monitoring equipment to observe the animals and track potential poachers. The intrusion of poachers into a site as well kept as a nuclear power plant requires excellent organization and good knowledge of the premises. The sanctuary is home to the "Big five" and the Grévy's zebra. For very different reasons the reserve was under the spotlight on October 19, 2013, when William Prince of Wales and Catherine Middleton traveled just before the announcement of their wedding.



Arrest of 3 men suspected of rhinoceros poaching

**Kruger National Park, Limpopo Province, South Africa
November 19, 2013**

Rangers seized poaching material and an axe. They are searching for a firearm. Since the beginning of 2013, Kruger Park has lost 500 rhinoceros.

Sentence to 10 years of prison for 2 poachers of a black rhinoceros

**Vryheid, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
November 21, 2013**

They were arrested in possession of 2 horns on their return trip heading towards Johannesburg. The arrest was made thanks to the sharing of information from the community and services inspecting environmental crimes and frauds.

Poaching of 2 rhinos

**Kruger National Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
November 27, 2013**

They were shot near Letaba Restcamp, in the center of the park. The Rangers and the anti-poaching brigade intervened rapidly. They immediately started tracking the footprints and traces. Since the beginning of the year in South Africa 891 rhinos have been poached, that is 223 more than during the whole of 2012 and 443 more than in 2011.

Poaching of 2 white rhinos

**Matopos National Park, Province of Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
November 2013**

The Matopos Hills dominate the granite shield that covers most of Zimbabwe country. Registered since 2003 in UNESCO World Heritage, they are famous for the largest concentration of rock art in Southern Africa. They now report a less prestigious event: the death and mutilation of 2 white rhinos.



Rock art in Nswatugi Cave,
Matopos National Park

2 white rhinos poached
Nwanedi Provincial Park, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
November 2013

After finding 2 white rhino carcasses, one of which had both horns cut, park officials decided to transport the last surviving rhino to a safer place. The transfer took place in the highest secrecy. The reserve counted 6 rhinos at the beginning of the year. In June, a mother rhino was killed her one month calf was found, stunned and curled up against his mother's body. He was placed in a specialized orphanage.

Poaching of a rhinoceros
OI-Pajeta Sanctuary, Laikipia County, Kenya
November 2013

The OI-Pajeta Sanctuary shelters around 100 rhinoceros.

Poaching of a white rhino
Mkhuze game Reserve, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
November 2013

The carcass from which the horn had been removed was found 3 to 4 days after the killing. This brings the total to 80 rhinos in KwaZulu-Natal to have been slaughtered this year.

Sentencing to 6 years prison term for attempted poaching of a rhino
Makhado, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
Decembre 2, 2013

A young man from Mozambique and his 2 accomplices had been spotted last October by rangers while roaming in Kruger Park. A stroll that was in no way peaceful. The trio was armed. There was crossfire. One poacher escaped, another was killed. The last was arrested. He has just been sentenced for attempted rhino poaching, illegal possession of firearms and illegal entry into the National Park. Rhino defenders believe that the heavier the penalty, the more they deter potential offenders and benefit wildlife. In this case, rhino defenders appreciated that bail before trial was refused.

Court hearing for a man suspected of rhino poaching
Hoopstad, Province of Free State, South Africa
Decembre 3, 2013

The unit in charge of fighting rhino poaching was on a routine patrol in the Sandveld Natural Reserve when they fell nose to nose with a group of 3 with quite opposite intentions. A fight broke out. One suspect died. A high caliber rifles (A.375), a silencer, an assortment of machetes and axes and ammunition were found on site. This is the fourth rhino to be poached in the province of Free State since the beginning of the year. The reservation covers 37,000 ha.

Repentance of a rhino poacher
County of Isiolo, Kenya
December 29, 2013

Should we believe it? Kelechi Parkusaa, 39 years old, a star of poaching, confessed to killing 2 white rhinos in the Lewa park sanctuary. «On the Trail» suggested that Lewa shooters on 17 November 2013 had probably benefited from insider tips. Even worse: Kelechi Parkusaa was a ranger by day and a rhino killer by night! Before admitting his crimes, the horn thief confessed to the old sages of the Raparua local community and to prove his sincerity, he laid down his arms and ammunition. Hopefully he handed them over reliable hands.



© Joseph Kanyo

One white rhino poached
Solio Ranch, County of Nyeri, Kenya
December 30, 2013

The poachers broke through the fencing. They used the quietest weapon. Guards didn't hear anything. The arrow was poisoned. The white rhino was 6 years old.



© Rhino Watch Safari Lodge

Solio Ranch

Poaching of 3 white rhinos
iSimangaliso Wetland Park, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa
December 2013

The couple with their baby rhino was shot dead.

One rhino poached
Gravelotte, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
December 2013

Bullets are flying also in Gravelotte in South Africa. This is the 947th rhino killed in 2013.

2 rhinos poached
Dorset, Province of Limpopo, South Africa
December 2013

The death toll up to December in South Africa is 953 victims and at the end of the year it will total 1,004.

Pollution in Kruger Park

The rupture of a tailing dam containing liquid waste from a phosphate mine, on December 28, 2013, caused a surge of acid and toxic sludge to flow into the Selati River a tributary of the Olifants River (Elephant River) which flows into the Limpopo River which in turn drains into the Indian Ocean from Mozambique. Over a distance of at least 15 km, a massive fish die-off was discovered by the Park Rangers, temporarily diverted from guarding the rhinoceroses. Veterinary services are concerned about the direct and indirect impacts of the pollution on crocodiles that feed on the dying or dead fish and the hippopotamuses that splash around and graze on grass in the river and adjacent marshes. Birds could also be impacted by the pollution of the Park and the entire trophic web. The decomposition of the dead fish, mammals, birds and reptiles could also, in the mid-term, modify the water quality and provoke the outbreak of toxic algae such as cyanobacteria. Downstream drinking water sourced from Olifants River, and used to provide water for tourists and staff in the Park, was suspended. According to the mine owners the dam overflow was caused by exceptionally heavy rains whereas other sources point at the poor maintenance of the facilities.



Bosveld phosphate mine in Phalaborwa



Olifants River (Elephant River)

AMERICA

OPERATION CRASH 1/3

**Court appearance of Mr. M. Slattery Jr. accused of trafficking rhino horns
Brooklyn, State of New York, United States
November 5, 2013**

Michael Slattery Jr, 23 years old and of Irish nationality, part of the Rathkeale Rovers network (see « On the Trail » n°2) is in prison in Brooklyn. He risks a 5 year prison sentence. He carried out several purchases and sales of rhino horns in the United States. Under the Endangered Species Act Slattery and his front men were not entitled to sell, exchange or trade in any other State than the one of origin or abroad. This restriction applied to the stuffed rhino head bought in Austin, Texas which he sold in Flushing, New York where the "antique" dealer of Chinese origin lives, who is also in prison for horn trafficking and for libation cups. Slattery would provide fake certificates with the official US Fish and Wildlife Service stamp. The arrest of the Kha clan (see « On the Trail » n°1), of the Chinese antique dealer and of Michael Slattery Jr. are credited to operation Crash launched 2 years ago in the United States to fight rhino horn trafficking.

Indictment for trafficking a black rhino trophy and use of a fraudulent document State of New Hampshire, United States November 2013

Ari B. Goldenberg, 46 years old, attempted to sell a black rhino piece for US\$ 35,000 along with a fake certificate. The buyer was an agent of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. M. Goldenberg had illegally purchased the rhino head with its horns for US\$ 1,000.

OPERATION CRASH 2/3

Mr. Wang sentenced to a 37 month prison term for trafficking objects made of rhino horn and ivory
New York, State of New York, United States
December 5, 2013

The antique dealer is accused of having illegally exported libation cups made of rhino horn and carved ivory towards China. To drink from a libation cup would ensure good health. Collectors are avid for antique cups. Such enthusiasm generated a counterfeit market with cups made from recently killed rhinos. On Mr. Wang's computer in his home in Flushing, New York, pictures of raw and carved horns, messages concerning transactions and instructions were considered proof of his involvement.

Mr. Wang pleaded guilty. The prison term will be followed by 3 years probation. The New York “antique dealer’s” arrest is one of the outcomes of Operation Crash launched in the US to eradicate rhino horn trade and particularly to weaken the Rathkeale Rovers’ activities (See « On the Trail » n°2). The story is far from over Operation Crash will feature again with the arrest of a colleague of Mr. Wang.

OPERATION CRASH 3/3

Court appearance of Mr. Li for smuggling rhino horns and elephant ivory

Newark, State of New Jersey, United States

December 19, 2013

Zhifei Li, another antique dealer, admitted before an American Court to being the organizer of a network which illegally exported towards China 30 rhino horns and carved ivory estimated to be worth U.S\$ 4.5 million. Mr. Li admitted sending, on 2 occasions, to China rhino horns intact or cut into pieces and placed into porcelain vases or sent in separate parcels after meticulously wrapping them in duct tape.

Mr. Li used the same ploy to export from the United States to China 2 elephant tusks weighing 50kg mislabeling them as «automobile parts» and 60 carved and sculpted ivory pieces.

Mr. Li was caught at an antique show in Miami when he bought 2 black rhinoceros horns for U.S\$ 59,000 from a man who was in fact an undercover agent from Operation Crash and to whom Mr. Li stated that he would be happy to buy new horns and if it was possible to send them directly to Hong Kong without going through his hands or the usual circles. Mr. Li’s rhino horns were shipped to Hong Kong where they were carved «to make as old» into fake antique ceremonial libation cups which cost a fortune.

ASIA

Poaching of one male rhino

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

October 7, 2013

One more hard blow at the Kaziranga National Park. The rhino was shot down in the Agoratoli area. It was raining. It happened at night. The tragedy took place on the Brahmapoutre riverbank, 2 km away from a guard’s camp. They didn’t hear the gun shots. The body was found the next morning during routine patrols. This is the 22nd rhino killed this year in the park.

Poaching of one rhino

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, State of Assam, India

October 8, 2013

Having heard 7 gun shots, guards intervened rapidly on site. It was 6 p.m. The poachers did not have the time to take the horn. At least 4 poachers are involved. 2 of them were arrested. One of them is

thought to have welcomed into his home members of the Naga community known for their ancestral hunting skills.

Seizure of the horn of an Indian one-horned rhino

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India.

October 24, 2013

35 rhinos killed in the Kaziranga National Park since the beginning of 2013. The last was shot down near the express route 37. The villains didn’t have time to saw off the horn. Bullet proof jackets and AK 47 cartridges were found on the scene.

Poaching of rhinos

Manas National Park, State of Assam, India

October 29, 2013

Indian Rhino Vision 2020, the program supported by the WWF to transport rhinos to India, is in trouble. The Manas National Park has just lost its sixth rhino to a violent death. A poacher was killed in the pursuit. An agent of the park is suspected of having provided the poachers with information on the rhinos’ location. Local WWF agents have deserted this terrain considering the park too unstable and dangerous.

GANG

Seizure of a rhinoceros horn and small parts of another horn

Sivasagar, Assam, India

October 31, 2013

Police arrested 2 members of a gang of rhino horn dealers. The seized horn weighs 1.35 kilograms, and measures more than 20 cm. It is estimated on the black market at Rs 45 lakh (US\$ 73,484). To begin, the 2 suspects were put in custody for 48 hours.

Arrest of 3 suspected rhino poachers

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

October 2013

A carcass was found by guards during a routine patrol. The animal was killed and dehorned by night. 3 suspects were arrested. The discovery took place on the day of the reopening of the park after 4 months of monsoon.

Rhino Poaching

Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

November 2, 2013

The rhino population in the park is about one hundred individuals. During Divali celebrations, guards know that risks are significant. Firecrackers can mask gunshots. This is the first victim of the year in the 80 km² of the park.

Poaching of 2 rhinos

Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

November 9, 2013

The female rhino and her calf were killed near the Brahmaputra River. Late in the evening, forest guards heard shots but the poachers managed to take the horns and escape. 4 cartridges of .303 caliber were found. Guards say that in winter it is hard to intervene in time because of heavy fog therefore facilitating poachers' intrusions.

The Aranya Surakshya Samiti NGO has asked that the army be called upon to protect the park from pillage. In protest, they organized along with other local organizations a demonstration that took place on the highway bordering the park.

This NGO was founded in 1996. Its aim is to fight poaching in the Orang forest reserve. The NGO's activities have broadened to the protection of the environment, the struggle against deforestation and corruption, and awareness programs.



Poaching of one rhino

Kaziranga National Park, State of Assam, India

November 24, 2013

The 38th rhino killed since the beginning of 2013 has just been found by a forest guard patrol. The horn, ears and pieces of leather were taken from the body.

Seizure of one kilogram of rhino horns

Province of Binh Phuoc, Region of Southeast, Vietnam

November 27, 2013

An informant warned Education for Nature Vietnam (ENV) that a so-called specialist in Chinese traditional medicine was attempting to sell a rhino horn. The police was warned and they arrested the conman. Tests are in process to confirm authenticity of the horn.

Arrest of 3 poachers

Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park, State of Assam, India

November 29, 2013

The attempted poaching was prevented. The main suspect Nurul Islam is well known by the National Park's surveillance teams had been seen the night before in a nearby restaurant. The team followed the suspects until the middle of the night at the home of one of his accomplices, Isuf Ali, where 2 shotguns .303 calibre and 52 rounds of ammunition were seized. The trio apparently intended to break into the park in the early morning.

Seizure of 4 boxes of ivory and 3.4 kg of rhino horn

Province of Bac Giang, Region of Northeast, Vietnam

November 2013

The police intercepted a taxi and found 4 boxes of chopsticks and other items thought to be made of ivory and 3.4 kg of suspected rhino horns. The passengers were put in custody pending the outcome of the identification of seizures by specialists. Police acted on confidential informations.

Seizure of a rhino horn

Jalukbari, State of Assam, India

December 2013

Police arrested the man in possession of a rhino horn weighing about 1kg. He was trying to sell it. 1kg of rhino horn can be sold up to US\$ 55,000. The suspect is employed by health services in the Gola-ghat District.

Poaching of a rhinoceros

Manas National Park, Assam, India

December 31, 2013

The animal was slaughtered in the center of the Park. The poaching could have been committed with the help of someone on the inside. It was a 13 year old female named Giribala who was slaughtered by machine gun. She left behind an orphan of 9 months. She had been transferred from the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary to the Manas Park in 2011. 18 rhinoceros have already been transferred to Manas Park. The Indian Rhino Vision 2020 that plans the reintroduction of rhinoceros into the park is more and more a menace!



Giribala

EUROPE

Sentencing to 10 months prison for stealing rhino horn replicas

London, England, United Kingdom

December 6, 2013

Events date back to August 2011. After breaking into the Tring National History museum at night, the man broke the glass pain to take the rhino horns. What he didn't know is that, 2 months earlier and after a series of thefts in other museums in England and Europe, museum personnel had exchanged the real horns with copies made with resin. The fake stealer was sentenced to a real prison term to the museum director's satisfaction: "The rhino specimens have a real cultural and scientific value." "Each of the specimens in our scientific collection is as unique and irreplaceable as a work of art."

Seizure of 2 rhinoceros horns (6.77kg) and Bears' bile

Prague Václav Havel Airport, Czech Republic

Late December 2013

The 2 rhino horns and dried bear bile were hidden amongst fake electrical devices in a cylinder spool which should have been wound with metal coils. Czech custom officers discovered the contraband following an x-ray inspection of the parcel. In fact the horns were patiently and meticulously hidden under layers of resin, plastic wrap and tar. The total value of the smuggled items destined for Vietnam is U.S. \$ 360,000 or U.S. \$ 53,000 per kilo.

